

HIROSHIMA JAPAN: A LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCE



What did a study abroad trip to Japan mean for me? In a word, opportunities. Hiroshima, Japan was the best opportunity for me, because it allowed me to study the language and culture first hand. Traveling to Hiroshima was a paving stone on the path to my future and I would not trade the time I spent in Japan for anything. I

was able to interact with Japanese people on a more personal level and use the language I am so passionate about learning on a daily basis. This trip also gave me invaluable insights into another nation. I was allowed to look beyond my own borders and see how another group of people lived and interacted with not only their own people but others as well.

This trip, as I stated, opened many opportunities up for me. By interacting with another group of people, I got to make connections on an international level. It was not only Japanese people I got to communicate with on a daily basis, though, there were people at Hiroshima from many different backgrounds and cultures. I had the privilege of meeting people from Kenya, Iran, Malaysia, and the Philippines, just to name a few. Meeting with this diverse group of people, I got to ask questions about how life is lived in other parts of the world. The information and



experiences I gained while living in Japan will stay with me for the rest of my life.

Hiroshima itself has a rich history and I felt honored to be able to participate and learn from. I got to visit several memorial sites while staying in Japan including the Atomic Bomb Dome, Peace Memorial Park, the Korean Memorial, and some of the underground sites that managed to survive the bombings. Being able to see these sites meant something to me that I cannot begin to express in words, but they brought on so many raw emotions that I often had to fight back tears. However, even though there were some sad times there were plenty of fun times as well. I was able to see the Sakura trees in full bloom, and I went to festivals and school events as well.

My time in Hiroshima Japan was not only spent having fun, I also got the opportunity to study the way young adults in Japan study. My time at Hiroshima Jogakuin Daigaku was one of the best times of my life. The teachers were extremely helpful with studies, and because class sizes were small, plenty of time could be spent one-on-one with the teacher if need be. The students were also very supportive and helpful. Many of the women, since it is an all women's college, were eager to help me learn the Japanese language, and many of them invited me to events at school and out to have fun.

I would fully encourage and support any woman who wants to go to Hiroshima to study. It is a wonderful opportunity full of many amazing things to learn, see, and do. The faculty, staff, and students at Hiroshima Jogakuin, as I have stated, are really helpful, very nice, and supportive. The student tutors and advising teachers are helpful as well and will do their best to make sure that the school experiences run smoothly. My own transition into the school was made very easy

by the care and support of my tutors and advising teacher. Some advice I would give others is to not be afraid to ask questions and get help, not only from tutors but from other classmates as well.

I would also encourage students to try as many new things as possible. Try the food, go to the temples and shrines, go to the all the festivals and different events on campus and off that are happening, go to the museums and gardens, and try new things that have never been done before. Japan, especially Hiroshima, has so much to offer a student. A deep, rich culture and history, a beautiful landscape with many exquisite buildings to see, several islands to visit, and a wonderful language to learn are all within your grasp. The historical sites are definitely educational, but also going to places like the mall and out to eat can help a student gain knowledge as well. Use everything as a chance to learn. The language, the customs and traditions, and the experiences all play a part in learning and retention.

In conclusion, the biggest thing my time in Japan helped me to accomplish was grow as a person by broadening my horizons. I learned how to better communicate, adapt to new situations, and to use what I have at any given time to my advantage. I hope to carry the new skills and knowledge I have gained in Japan with me into my future career. I am very thankful to have had the chance to study in Japan and I hope that I can return some day.